

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

APPLICATION AND AFFIDAVIT OF THE)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR A)

SEARCH WARRANT AUTHORIZING THE)

MAGISTRATE NO. *15-880m*

OPENING OF UNITED STATES)

(UNDER SEAL)

MAIL PRIORITY MAIL EXPRESS)

PARCEL EK 846097373 US)

I, Justin D. Koble, being duly sworn, do hereby state the following:

1. I am employed as a United States Postal Inspector in the Western District of Pennsylvania. I have been so employed since July 2014, and am presently assigned to investigate money laundering and drug trafficking offenses. I have received training in the detection and investigation of money laundering and drug trafficking. As part of my duties, I investigate incidents where the United States Mails are used for the purpose of transporting non-mailable matter, including controlled substances such as marijuana, cocaine and heroin, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1), 843(b), and 846, and Title 18, United States Code, Section 1716. Previously I was employed as a state law enforcement officer in the state of Florida from January 2007 through June 2014. During this time I conducted numerous investigations involving the possession, sale, and manufacture of narcotics. The following information has been obtained by me personally or has been provided to me by postal employees.

2. I have been involved in the investigation and discovery of drug contraband and drug proceeds on multiple occasions. I have personally been the affiant for search warrants which have resulted in the discovery of controlled substances and drug proceeds. My current assignment to the Pittsburgh Processing and Distribution Center ("P&DC") involves investigating the use of the U.S. Mails by drug traffickers, in which established drug parcel profiles, surveillance, and drug detection dogs, among other investigative tools, are utilized.

3. Experience and drug trafficking intelligence have demonstrated that Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express are commonly used to transport drugs and drug proceeds because of their volume, reliability, and the time pressures they place on law enforcement agents to execute a successful controlled delivery.

4. On October 14, 2015, Postal Inspection Service interdiction personnel in Pittsburgh interdicted the Priority Mail Express parcel bearing USPS tracking number EK 846097373 US, addressed to Faith Desterdick, 3144 Broadway St., PO Box 304, Eureka, CA 95501, with a return address of Steph Desterdick, 424 S. Pacific Ave., Pgh, Pa 15224. Due to the parcel matching certain characteristics of the established drug profile, as discussed below, the parcel was pulled from the mail stream for further investigation. The Priority Mail Express parcel is a white USPS Priority Mail Express box measuring approximately 12 1/2" x 3 1/8" x 15 5/8", weighing approximately one pound, 12.8

ounces, and bearing \$40.15 in U.S. postage. (A photograph of the label bearing USPS tracking number EK 846097373 US is attached as Exhibit 1.)

5. The subject Priority Mail Express parcel did not require a signature for delivery. Signature waivers are commonly used on parcels used in the shipment of controlled substances and their proceeds. The waivers allow intended recipients to avoid contact with the delivery employee and/or law enforcement, should the parcel be suspicious.

6. Through experience gained in drug investigations by Postal Inspectors and other law enforcement agents, and through information provided by individuals who have been involved in buying, selling, and shipping drugs by Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express, the Postal Inspection Service has established a drug profile consisting of characteristics frequently shared by parcels containing controlled substances and proceeds mailed through the United States Postal Service. The Pittsburgh office of the Postal Inspection Service utilizes this profile to screen Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express parcels received at the P & DC, and to review Express Mail labels retained by the USPS.

7. Among the characteristics of the drug profile possessed by the parcel that is the subject of this search warrant affidavit is the "source territory" origination of the parcel. Postal Inspectors, special agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and other intelligence sources have identified California as a source state for illegal drugs

flowing into Pennsylvania and a destination state for proceeds from the sale of these illegal drugs. Training and experience have also shown Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express are methods commonly used for mailing these proceeds.

8. On October 14, 2015, electronic inquiries of the Clear database were made for the purpose of confirming the validity of the return address contained on the subject Priority Mail Express parcel, Steph Desterdick, 424 S. Pacific Ave., Pgh, Pa 15224. The Clear inquiry indicated 424 S. Pacific Avenue is a valid address in the 15224 zip code, however, Steph Desterdick is not known to be associated with the address. On October 15, 2015, U.S. Postal Inspectors made contact with the owner of the residence who stated he did not know anyone with the last name Desterdick. The telephone number provided in the return address of the parcel, (412)805-8942, was called and found to ring to a fax machine.

9. On October 14, 2015, electronic inquiries of the Clear database were made for the purpose of confirming the validity of the recipient's address contained on the subject Priority Mail Express parcel, Faith Desterdick, 3144 Broadway St., PO Box 304, Eureka, CA 95501. The address was found to be a valid address in the 95501 zip code, currently associated with UPS Store #2235, a commercial mail receiving agent. On October 15, 2015, U.S. Postal Inspectors received the application for Box 304 from the UPS Store. The application indicated the box is currently assigned to Faith Desterdick. A

criminal history check of Faith Desterdick revealed an extensive criminal history, including an active arrest warrant for grand theft auto in Hernando County, FL, and arrests for possession of marijuana for sale, sale of marijuana, and possession of a controlled substance without a prescription. U.S. Postal Inspectors attempted to call the telephone number provided for the intended recipient on the parcel, (707)443-8028, and found the telephone number to be out of service. Clear has proven to be reliable in previous investigations in determining the validity of names and addresses.

10. Through my experience, I know drug shippers will often list a false or non-existent return address, or use a valid return address with a false sender's name or no name, to reduce the possibility of apprehension by law enforcement. A valid recipient's address is necessary to ensure delivery.

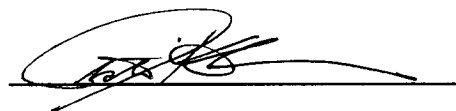
11. Because the instant parcel (Exhibit 1) was found to possess some of the characteristics of the drug profile, it was subjected to examination by drug canine "Spencer".

12. Spencer, a dog trained to detect controlled substances, along with his handler Pennsylvania State Police Trooper Steve Lucia, was requested to conduct the narcotics search. Spencer is certified as a drug detection dog for marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. Trooper Lucia informed me Spencer has been used in numerous police searches and in training exercises, and has shown a high proficiency in

locating hidden drugs. (Trooper Lucia and Spencer's qualifications are attached hereto as Exhibit 2.)

13. On October 14, 2015, Spencer examined the instant parcel (Exhibit 1). According to Trooper Lucia, Spencer positively alerted to the instant parcel, indicating the presence of controlled substances within at approximately 8:02 p.m. I know, based on training and experience, that individuals who regularly handle controlled substances often leave the scent of controlled substances on the box, contents of the box (including drug proceeds), and/or other packaging material they handle.

14. Based upon my training, experience, and expertise as a Postal Inspector, I submit that there is probable cause to search the Priority Mail Express parcel bearing USPS tracking number EK 846097373 US, for controlled substances, drug proceeds and other evidence of violations of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a) (1), 843(b), and 846, and Title 18, United States Code, Section 1716. The above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.



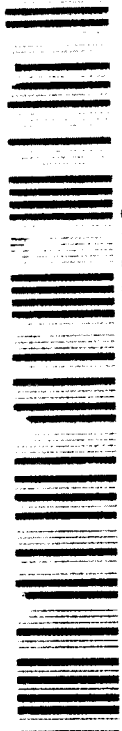
Justin D. Koble

U.S. Postal Inspector

Sworn and subscribed to me
this 22nd day of October 2015



United States Magistrate Judge



950737305

EXPRESS

CUSTOMER USE ONLY

FROM: (PLEASE PRINT)

PHONE ()

PAYMENT BY ACCOUNT (if applicable)

DELIVERY OPTIONS (Customer Use Only)

☐ **SIGNATURE REQUIRED** Note: The mailer must check the Signature Required box. Requires the addressee's signature. OR 2) Purchases additional insurance. Purchases Return Receipt service. If the box is not checked the Priority Mail will be sent by mail receptacle or other secure location without attempting to deliver the item.

Delivery Options

- ☐ No Saturday Delivery (delivered next business day)
- ☐ Sunday/Holiday Delivery Required (additional fee, where available)
- ☐ 10:30 AM Delivery Required (additional fee, where available)

*Refer to USPS.com or local Post Office for details.

TO: (PLEASE PRINT)

Page 2 of 2

ZIP + 4® (U.S. ADDRESSES ONLY)

- For pickup or USPS Tracking™, visit USPS.com or call 800-222-1811.
- \$100.00 insurance included.

WRITE FIRMLY TO MAKE ALL COPIES LEGIBLE.

Inspection Service
Exhibit

Trooper Steven V. LUCIA

Canine "Spencer"

Pennsylvania State Police

Canine Unit

Team K9-57

I, Tpr. Steven V. LUCIA, Badge #8813, am a member of the Pennsylvania State Police. I enlisted in the Pennsylvania State Police on September 29, 2002. I am currently assigned to the Bureau of Emergency and Special Operations as a drug detection canine handler. I became a Pennsylvania State Police drug detection dog handler in December 2008 and am currently assigned to Troop B-Washington.

Beginning in October 2008 I attended and successfully passed a 10-week narcotic detection canine course conducted by master trainers of the Pennsylvania State Police located in Hershey, PA. At the completion of training I was assigned to handle Pennsylvania State Police drug detection dog "Spencer" and became Pennsylvania State Police team K9-57. As a canine team we are required to complete yearly drug detection certifications which all have been successfully completed. The most recent certification was on October 6, 2014. The certification process is comprised of numerous searches using a variety of environments and distractions. Canine "Spencer" is a black Labrador Retriever. "Spencer" is proficient in locating drugs during room/building searches, vehicle searches, luggage searches, open area searches, commercial motor vehicle searches, and parcel/package searches during monthly training as well as in the field. "Spencer" is trained and certified to passively indicate to the following odors and their derivatives:

1. Marijuana/Hashish
2. Cocaine Hydrochloride/Cocaine Base
3. Heroin Hydrochloride
4. D, L-Methamphetamine Hydrochloride

"Spencer" has been a certified Pennsylvania State Police drug detection dog since December 2008 and has been involved in numerous drug and currency seizures as part of his duties.

In 2009, "Spencer" was utilized to search 97 vehicles, 21 structures/buildings, 14 schools, 5 luggage scans, 3 parcel scans and 11 cash scans. These utilizations resulted in the seizure of 106,134 grams of marijuana, 28 grams of cocaine, 51 grams of heroin, 1,554 grams of other drugs, 93 items of paraphernalia, \$95,688 in US Currency, and 2 firearms for a total of \$1,187,298.00 worth of contraband/assets seized.

In 2010, "Spencer" was utilized to search 127 vehicles, 30 luggage scans, 28 structures/buildings, 8 schools, 6 cash scans and 1 parcel. These utilizations resulted in the seizure of 108,579 grams of marijuana, 1,105 grams of cocaine, 33 grams of heroin, 146 grams of other drugs, 80 items of paraphernalia, \$55,892 in US Currency, 4 firearms, and 3 vehicles for a total of \$1,278,002.00 worth of contraband/assets seized.

**Inspection Service
Exhibit**

2

Label 113, July 1987

In 2011, "Spencer" was utilized to search 133 vehicles, 13 structures/buildings, 22 parcels, 8 schools, 3 luggage scans and 15 cash scans. These utilizations resulted in the seizure of 149,699 grams of marijuana, 1,320 grams of cocaine, 15 grams of heroin, 69 grams of other drugs, 30 items of drug paraphernalia, 2 vehicles, 2 firearms, and \$461,386 in US Currency for a total of \$2,106,756.00 worth of contraband/assets seized.

In 2012, "Spencer" was utilized to search 111 vehicles, 84 parcels, 37 structures/buildings, 13 schools, 1 luggage scan, and 12 cash scans. These utilizations have resulted in the seizure of 191,175 grams of marijuana, 1,577 grams of cocaine, 89 grams of heroin, 673 grams of other drugs, 45 items of drug paraphernalia, 6 firearms, and \$282,013 in US Currency for a total of \$2,381,488 worth of contraband/assets seized.

In 2013, "Spencer" was utilized to search 50 vehicles, 88 parcels, 23 structures/buildings, 12 schools, 11 luggage scans, 2 cash scans, and 4 open area searches. These utilizations have resulted in the seizure of 234,624 grams of marijuana, 275 grams of cocaine, 273 grams of heroin, 11 grams of methamphetamines 177 grams of other drugs, 23 items of drug paraphernalia, 4 firearms, 1 vehicle, and \$255,689 in US Currency for a total of \$2,696,779 worth of contraband/assets seized.

During my career with the Pennsylvania State Police, I have dealt with a multitude of incidents which have resulted in numerous arrests and seizures for narcotics and narcotics-related violations both as a primary investigator as well as an assisting investigator. During my tenure as a Pennsylvania State Trooper, and in addition to the training listed above, I have received training in the following courses from various Federal, state, local, and private agencies:

1. Operation SHIELD
2. Operation SHIELD II
3. Desert Snow Phase 1,2,3
4. Desert Snow Phase 4
5. Operation 420: Advanced Criminal Interdiction (CMV)
6. Top Gun Narcotics Investigations
7. Conducting Complete Traffic Stops
8. Winning Interdiction
9. Hidden Compartment Detection
10. Looking Beyond the Traffic Stop
11. Hotel/Motel/Parcel Interdiction
12. Anti-Counterfeiting
13. Interview and Interrogation
14. Vehicle Equipment
15. Operation Nighthawk
16. Forensic Evidence Gathering
17. Operation 420: Advanced Criminal Interdiction (PC)
18. Sovereign Citizen Training